

NEAL of the NAVY

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "Red Mouse," "Running Fight," "Catspaw," "Blue Buckle," etc.

Novelized from the Photo Play of the Same Name Produced by the Pathe Exchange, Inc.

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At the Majestic Theatre each Friday.

SYNOPSIS.

On the day of the eruption of Mount Pelee, Capt. John Hardin, the steamer Princess rescues five-year-old Annette Hington from an open boat, but is forced to leave behind her father and his companions. Hington is adopted by Hernandez and Ponto in a vain attempt to get papers which Hington has managed to send aboard the Princess with his daughter, papers proving his title to the island of Cinnabar. Hington's injury causes him to become a blank. Thirteen years elapse. Hernandez, now an opium smuggler, with Ponto, Inez, a female accomplice, and the mindless brute that once was Hington, come to Seaport, where the widow of Captain Hardin is living with her son Neal and Annette Hington, and plot to steal the papers left to Annette by her father. Neal tries for admission to the Naval academy, but through the treachery of Joey Welcher is defeated by Joey and disgraced. Neal enlists in the navy. Inez sets a trap for Joey and the conspirators get him in their power. He agrees to steal the papers for them but accidentally sets fire to the Hardin home and the brute-man rescues Annette with the papers from the flames. Annette discovers that heat applied to the map reveals the location of the lost island. Subsequently in a struggle for its possession the map is torn in three parts. Hernandez, Annette and Neal, each securing a portion. Annette sails on the Coronado in search of her father. The crew, crazed by cocaine smuggled aboard by Hernandez, mutiny, and are overcome by a boarding party from U. S. Destroyer Jackson, led by Neal.

SIXTH INSTALLMENT THE CAVERN OF DEATH

CHAPTER XXV.

A Secret Service Message.

Neal turned to Annette. "Good," he exclaimed, "you're safe at any rate. Where is my mother—where are the rest?"

"In the wireless room," returned Annette. She laughed a bit hysterically. "Even Joe Welcher is quite safe," she said.

Neal held her for a moment, shielding her body with his own. He looked about him.

"This mutiny is over," he said, in a tone of relief.

He was quite right. The mutiny was over, but with disastrous results. Neal's commanding officer lay on the deck with a fractured skull. The captain and the mate of the fruit steamer Coronado were dead or nearly so, and the decks were strewn with disabled, bleeding mutineers.

"Now come with me," said Neal. He waved his hand and a small squad of his companions joined him. He sought and found his mother and her frightened companions, Joe Welcher and the Castro girl—known to the rest as Irene Courtier. He led them aft and placed a guard over them.

"Now," he said warningly, "stay where you are, mother, and all the rest. You, too, Annette. I've got my work cut out for me for some hours." Annette shook her head. "Not until I dress your arm," she said.

Neal nodded to one of his companions. "Mate," he said, "shoot the first person who disobeys. I've got other fish to fry."

He went back to his work. He wiggled to the Jackson for his orders. The orders were brief and to the point:

"You take charge of the steamer. We are sending help."

He took charge of the steamer, not only because he was ordered, but because he had to.

Inside of half an hour he had his own lieutenant's wounds carefully and scientifically dressed—had all his own companions well attended to—in short, in a few hours he had righted the ship completely.

He signaled for further orders, for the Coronado was now resting quietly at anchor, and he got his orders:

"Put into the nearest port."

By midnight they had reached the nearest port—had docked. By midnight he had landed all his passengers and had reported considerable progress to his commander on the Jackson. By midnight something else happened—a secret service message filtered through space and got the wireless operator on the destroyer. Reduced from cipher, it read about like this:

American citizen said collecting arms and ammunition at Martinique or Porto Rico for Dolores insurrection. Follow at once. Investigate, arrest, prevent. Report.

Next morning this news had filtered into Neal. He took it to the homely little hotel where Annette and his mother and their party had been harbored for the night. He dropped into a chair.

"Now," he said, "I can talk and listen to some talk. Gee whiz, but I'm dog tired."

Annette pouted; then she smiled. "I love to talk," she said. And then she added two significant words. "Scar-face."

Neal leaped to his feet. "Scar-face," he cried. "Where? When? What?" "On the Coronado," said Annette. "I saw him twice—Scar-face and his two companions, the big man and the other."

"Tell me everything," said Neal. She told him. He waited impatiently until she had finished, then darted down upon the wharf again. He boarded the Coronado and gave or-

ders for a search. The search was made, but without avail, for at midnight on the night before something else happened. Hernandez and his two companions, together with his cargo of cocaine and heroin, had slipped quietly overboard into a borrowed rowboat and had disappeared.

Neal, chagrined, went back to Annette.

"The bird has flown," he said disgruntled.

"Where do you go, Neal?" queried his mother.

"It's an open secret where we go," said Neal. "But why we go nobody knows. We go first to Martinique."

Annette sprang to her feet. "Martinique," she cried, "that is where my father came from—where you picked me up. I go there, too, Neal. It's the beginning point. Is there I can find trace of my father?"

Inez shrugged her shoulders. "It is fate," she said.

"We will all go," said Mrs. Hardin. "We will stick to Neal. But how?"

"Search me," said Neal. "But I can find that out—there must be some vessel from this port for southern waters."

Inez rose and placed a hand on Welcher's shoulder. "Leave it to Joey here and me," she said.

They scoured the town, but Inez Castro was looking for something other than a boat for Martinique. Finally she saw what she was looking for—a grimy hand thrust from behind a window shade.

Pausing before the door of a disreputable-looking habitation, she glanced up and down the street, then dragging Joe Welcher close behind her she entered the low doorway and passed into the gloom beyond. A moment later she faced Hernandez and his crew.

"So," she said airily, pushing Joe Welcher into a chair, "so my flash, friends, where do you think we go to now?"

"Where?" demanded Hernandez.

"To Martinique," said Inez Castro. Hernandez smiled and slapped his thigh. "So you go to Martinique," he cried, with a note of triumph in his voice. "How very fortunate. I go to Martinique myself."

The governor of Martinique glanced gravely at the pretty girl who faced him. He laid down the piece of tattered parchment that he had just inspected and took up the locket that she placed before him.

"I knew your father well fifteen or sixteen years ago—even before that. I remember him. This resembles him, this picture, it does indeed." He smiled. "I remember something else. I remember also you."

"You remember me," cried Annette. "You must have a wonderful memory, sir."

The governor held up his hands. "One remembers everything that happened in a year like that," he said, "a year that wiped out thousands upon thousands of our people."

"Is there any clue to my father?" queried Annette.

"Little one," said the governor, "there was no clue to anything or anybody, or any place."

Annette rose. "There's nothing else that you remember of my father?" she queried.

"The governor searched his memory. 'Yes,' he said. 'I think a mystery—there was a tang of adventure about him. He, too, was a rover—always restless—always on the move. But for his child one might have called him a soldier of fortune—honest, perhaps too honest, but fearless—'

"And true," said Annette.

"Fearless and true," repeated the governor nodding.

"What is past is past," he said. "Old Pelee is ashamed of himself. The Isle of Martinique grows green. We sing, we laugh, my people and myself. Even all this week we celebrate. You must join us." He signed half a dozen cards of invitation and handed them to Joe Welcher, who sat quite as usual, sulking in the background. "The governor's levee," he went on airily, "and you are all invited."

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Razor Back.

Around the corner of the coast line on the Isle of Martinique—invisible both from the bridge of the destroyer Jackson and from the grounds of the governor, there jutted out into the sea a cliff, stern and forbidding. As a matter of fact, it was not all rock, this cliff—a large part of its formation was of clay. Down the face of this cliff, its sharp edges rising now and then into the air like peaks, there trailed a path, narrow and perilous, from shore to cliff edge, known to certain of the inhabitants of Martinique as the Razor Back.

Along this sharp, steep edge ran a rope, and climbing the Razor Back, clinging to his shoulders, upward crawled a man. Below him, thrusting its nose into the beach, was a disreputable-looking boat laden with heavy wooden boxes.

This man, in reality a giant, looked like a pygmy from below as he crawled hand over hand to the heights above. At the edge of the cliff he was assisted by two other men who dragged him on to terra firma and who relieved him of his burden. This burden they carried between them to a hut. Before doing so they cut the big man across the shoulders with a whip and pointed to the shore below. The big man nodded. He stood for one moment on the edge of the cliff and gazed about him. He gauged the grade of the wicked, sharp, big Razor Back, and nodded once again; then nimbly he leaped over the face of the cliff, striking his heels into the edge of that perilous path some thirty feet or more below—and then in spite of his huge bulk ran like a deer down to the beach.

The men above dropped their burden and watched him.

"Ah," said Hernandez to his comrade Ponto, "the beast—he knows that Razor Back. He has not forgotten fifteen years ago."

There was a touch upon Hernandez's shoulder. Hernandez whirled as though at the fall of a trigger. A third man faced him, low-browed, cunning-eyed. Hernandez breathed a sigh of relief.

Half an hour later, with his final load strapped to his back, the brute climbed for the last time over the edge of the cliff, this time bearing his own burden to the hut. The three men already within the hut admitted him.

There was no window to this hut, and the light within was dim. The room was bare. "Tidy little bungalow, friend smuggler of Martinique," he said.

The other man smiled grimly in his turn. "Tidy is the word, soldier of

"Oh, well, if you will," said the smuggler, "but one must swim under water to find the other outlet." He folded his arms. "What do you think of my palace now?" he said.

He stooped and plucked at another iron ring in the floor. It disclosed a smaller hole—filled with contents of strange appearance.

Hernandez seized the lantern. "What of this?" he said. "This commodity I do not know."

"Careful," exclaimed the other man. "If those ghouls, the authorities, ever have the temerity to discover my cache, I shall not be here. I shall be a mile away—a mile, not less; and from that safe point of vantage I shall press a button and—pouf—none will ever live to tell the tale—none, save myself."

Hernandez eyed the other man with undisguised admiration.

"How I should like to see it work," he said.

The other nodded. "Some day—who knows—you shall, for you are a man after my own heart, friend Hernandez. Come, let us ascend to the skylight once again."

They did as they were bid and assisted the gentleman of Martinique to lower his new stores to their resting place below. Suddenly the man of Martinique held up his hand.

"Wait," he whispered, "someone comes."

Their trained ears detected the sound of stealthy footsteps creeping around and around the hut. The footsteps ceased and there was a knock upon the door.

Outside there stood a man—a man who sprang back in alarm at the sight of the crafty countenance of this cunning-looking stranger. But Hernandez elicited his teeth.

"It's Joe Welcher," said Hernandez. "Come in, Joey boy, you're welcome."

Welcher looked about him and then sidled to Hernandez.

"A note from Inez," he whispered to the latter, "about the governor's levee."

CHAPTER XXVII.

Decoy.

Neal leaped out of one of the small boats of the destroyer Jackson and ran nimbly up the wharf. He had good reason to, for on the veranda of a hotel not a quarter of a mile away he saw a girl he knew. In record time he was by her side.

"Look," said Annette to Neal's mother and Inez, "look who's here." "Always," said Inez, "do I like a uniform and," she added coyly, with a leer toward Neal, "and what comes in them too."

"You got my note?" queried Annette. "I got it," returned Neal, "but no go."

"What are you talking about?" said Annette. "We are specially invited by the governor himself."

"I'm out of it, I tell you," repeated Neal. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll come to the back gate of the governor's garden and I'll flirt with you."

Many came and most were served that night. But among the first to come, though none were served, were four uninvited guests. They were a strange quartet, these four, and they came to see rather than to be seen.

Each one of these four men became a shadow in himself, watching, ever watching. Suddenly there was a light tread upon the gravelled path. A jaunty figure swung into the moonlight and looked about him. Out of the hundred guests or so that clustered about the verandas of the distant house Neal peered anxiously for Annette Hington.

He trilled a little whistle—his signal and Annette's—and as though that whistle were a signal for an onslaught, a huge shadow and another sprang across the intervening space and caught Neal from behind. A coat or cloak descended over his head with all the effectiveness of a strait-jacket.

It was the governor himself who kept Annette within the range of artificial light and from her appointment in the moonlight out beyond.

While she still talked to the governor, an individual with cunning eyes and insinuating leer stepped up to the flunky at the main gate that led to the governor's mansion and handed him a note.

"For a guest—Miss Hington," he said. "I am to wait for an answer."

The flunky nodded, summoned another flunky, and handed him the note. The flunky made an inquiry or two,



Annette Conceals the Yellow Packet.

fortune," he returned. "At any rate it's safe. You think all the palace matches it. Come with me."

He strode to the corner of the hut and threw aside a matchbox. Leaning down he cleared away a number of short wormeaten boards, then he lifted up a sheetiron door. With an exclamation of surprise Hernandez and his companions observed that there was a narrow passageway cut through the solid earth. One by one each man lowered himself into this passageway and followed his leader. From a perpendicular shaft the corridor shelled off into a passage almost horizontal and widened as it went.

"This," said the smuggler of Martinique, "is the third story, as it were. Not, not gaudy."

"Now for the bathroom, if you please."

This time they descended a wider set of stairs and stepped out upon a ledge that surrounded a deep and limpid pool of water. Hernandez regarded this pool attentively.

"First it rises," he exclaimed, "and then it falls."

"Ah," said the man of Martinique, "we are at sea level. This is a cave and there is no outlet to it."

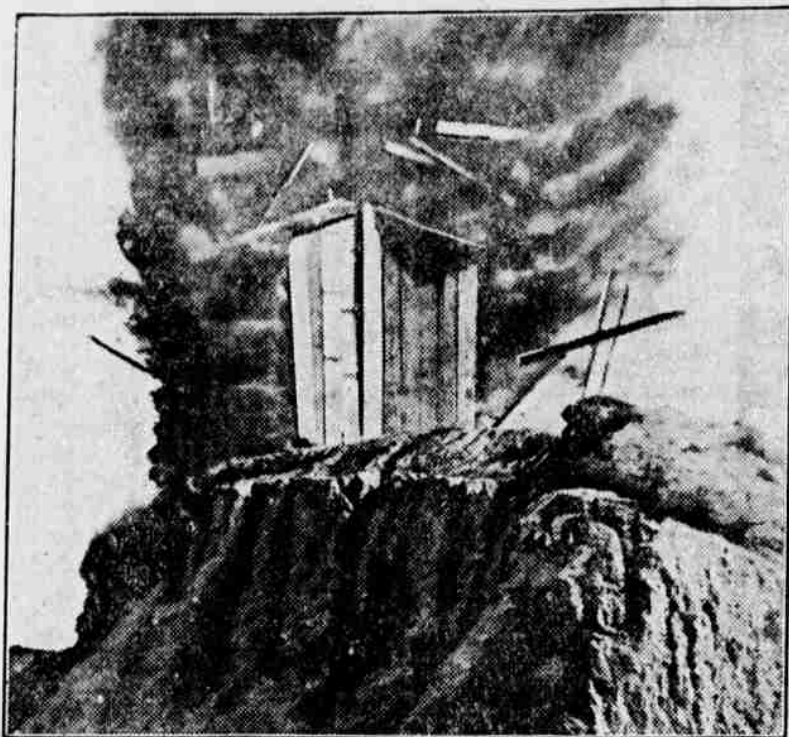
"Somewhere there is," returned Hernandez.

"Yes, in the attic—the sky parlor," said the other man.

"Somewhere else," said Hernandez.



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With a Mighty Roar Dropped Into the Sea.

hen stepped directly to the governor and handed him the note.

"This is the young lady here, Francois," exclaimed the governor.

Annette took the note to a window where there was somewhat better light, and opened it. It was written in a scrawling, unaccustomed hand. This is what it said:

Have seen scar face. Need you a moment for identification. We have run him down. Come with bearer of this note. Excuse scrawl—right hand N. G. Hastily, NEAL.

P. S.—Don't drag mother into this. Come as you are.

Annette beckoned to the flunky. "Where," she said, "is the bearer of this note?"

The flunky bowed. "Follow me," he said.

At the gate there stood a man waiting hat in hand—a man with cunning eyes and insinuating smile.

"Mr. Hardin sent you?" she inquired.

The man bowed. "Oui, mademoiselle," he returned.

"Where is he now?" she queried cautiously.

"Where he said he would wait—by the postern garden gate," returned the bearer.

Disarmed, she followed this man into the shadows.

In another instant she had reached a carriage and an instant later something descended over her head, smothering her cries—something bound her arms to her side. But the smuggler had been right. Neal was there, bound and speechless—helpless on the bottom of the carriage.

An instant later the vehicle rattled sharply off into the night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Sponge Diver.

Annette opened wide her eyes. She uttered an exclamation of delight as she saw Neal Hardin.

"Well, we're here," she said.

"I should think we were," said Neal. He looked about him. Annette was bound firmly to the only chair in the place and he was tied quite as firmly to a stanchion in another corner. The place was a rude hut.

"I see," said Neal, "that we're not alone."

"Obviously not," returned Annette. On the floor between them lay the brute resting but wide eyed with the lash of a whip lying across his shoulders. Ponto, the Mexican, watched red eyed and gloating.

Something happened in a corner. A portion of the floor rose from the ground and two men struggled up from a passageway. One of them was Hernandez; the other was the smuggler of Martinique. Hernandez nodded to Neal and to Annette. He took from his pocket a tattered parchment map which he had pasted well together.

"It is the map of the lost Isle of Cinnabar," he said in suave accents. "and I have other evidence besides." He glanced uncertainly toward the brute. "An identifying locket," he went on, "and other things."

"What do you expect to do with them?" said Annette belligerently. "You are not Annette Hington."

Hernandez smiled—a smile a bit too grimly. "Perhaps," he said, "I can find some Annette Hington who will do my bidding. At any rate there will be no Annette Hington who will try to thwart me."

Neal started. "What do you mean?" he said.

"I mean," returned Hernandez, with a gesture toward the smuggler of Martinique, "that in all parts of the world I am able to find people who do my bidding. This gentleman can do it well. I may as well tell you, children, that you have perhaps an hour to live, perhaps less."

The brute looked up, his eyes glassy, strange. He rubbed a red spot on his arm—the mark left by Hernandez' hypodermic needle.

"You are right, Ponto," said Hernandez. "It was the only way to drug him. Lend me your whip."

He seized the whip and struck the brute heavily across the shoulders. The brute sprang to his feet, growling in his throat, but he fell back before Hernandez.

Ponto untied a single knot—the knot that coud Neal to a stanchion. Then at another word the brute seized Neal, struggling, in his arms, and with him descended through the passageway.

Annette viewed this proceeding with alarm. She struggled fiercely.

Five minutes later the brute returned and once more under the stinging lash of the whip seized Annette and bore her below. Hernandez and his two companions followed them down.

"Ah," said the smuggler to Neal and Annette, "this house has all appointments. This is the swimming pool, my friends. You can swim here for one hour—or less. This is in truth a cavern of death. I hate to do it," he added just before he disappeared, "but needs must when the devil drives."

There was a click as the stone trap dropped into place.

"This is a pretty pickle," exclaimed Neal to Annette.

They were lying on opposite sides of that black pool.

"If you can crawl," said Neal, "crawl for your life."

Annette understood. Little by little Neal worked himself along his side of the ledge and Annette along hers, each gradually approaching the other around the circle. Finally their heads touched.

"Careful," said Neal; "close to the wall. Now let me have your hands. Let me unbind you first."

On the surface of the earth above Hernandez and his companions loaded their cases into a cart and drove far across the wilderness into a ravine.

"Here," said the man of Martinique, lifting up the cover of a metal box set in the rock, "here is the switch of which I spoke. One turn of the wrist—pouf—then oblivion."

"I gave them an hour," said Hernandez grimly, "and I keep my word. Let us drink."

On the shore below the cliff at the foot of the forbidding Razor Back a sponge diver disported himself in the water beside his boat, cutting and tearing sponges from their native home of rock and coral for a living. Then suddenly he forgot the business of collecting sponges.

He rose again, empty handed this time, and dived again, peering at something strange and new. Then with downward-slanting strokes he suddenly disappeared. He came up in an instant in almost total darkness, then bobbing on the surface he rubbed his eyes, jabbering excitedly.

"Hey there," cried a voice, "and who are you?"

The sponge diver jabbered some more. Well might he jabber. It was a strange sight that confronted him. Two young people were seated almost in darkness on the edge of a black pool.

"How did you get here?" queried Neal.

The man for all his jabbering was polyglot. He knew pidgin English and Neal knew how to talk it, so they got along admirably together. Neal told him his story. The man climbed up upon the ledge and listened eagerly. Suddenly he grew excited. It was evident that he knew the reputation of this place.

"You come with me—come right away," he said.

Neal set the fast-waning lantern by Annette's side. "One moment, dear," he said to Annette, "and I will be back. If what he says is true—"

In another instant with his hand on the shoulder of the sponge diver, Neal was swimming down, down toward the outer opening. As he saw the light filtering in from underneath he gave a gasp that almost choked him.

In another instant he had returned for Annette, and with her at his side the two swam in the direction that the diver had taken.

The sponge diver, still gesticulating excitedly, hauled them rapidly into his small boat.

"Me row, you row—like the devil," he exclaimed.

Neal rowed like the devil, and the flat-bottomed boat skimmed over the water like mad. Suddenly Annette in the bow extended her right arm.

"Look, look, Neal," she exclaimed, "for God's sake, look."

Neal heard first, then he looked, and as he looked the whole face of that huge cliff behind them thrust itself into the air and with a mighty roar dropped into the sea.

"It's Mount Pelee," cried Annette covering her face with her hands.

Neal shook his head. "That isn't Pelee," he returned grimly. "It's dynamite—if I know anything of dynamite."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)